

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 SAM-01 /107 W

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R 200432Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4964

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4722

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: KS

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF KOREAN PRESS

1. KOREAN WORKING PRESS, DESPITE FIRM ROKG GUIDANCE AND CONTROL, IS SEARCHING FOR MEANINGFUL ROLE IN CURRENT POLITICALLY TENSE PERIOD. TO DATE, HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL IN ONLY THREE DISCERNIBLE AREAS: A. GETTING NEWS OF EVENTS IN KOREA TO OUTSIDE WORLD, B. REPORTING AMERICAN REACTION TO CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KOREA AND C. PUBLICLY TESTING PRESENT LIMITS OF GOVERNMENT CONSTRAINT.

2. THIS EFFORT TAKING PLACE AS PRESS IS SUBJECT TO INSTRUCTION AND CONTROL FROM FOUR SOURCES: BLUE HOUSE, ROK COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE COMMAND (CIC), FOK CIA, AND MCUI. ADDITIONALLY, COVERAGE OF CURRENT POLITICAL TRAILS IS ALSO RESTRICTED TO MND REPORTERS WHO MAY NOT GO BEYOND WHAT MILITARY BRIEFER PROVIDES THEM AT END OF EACH SESSION. THIS ALSO TRUE OF CURRENT YUN PO-SUN COURT-MARTIAL.

3. PRESS EFFORTS TO GET KOREAN STORY TO OUTSIDE WORLD DIRECTLY RELATES TO ACTIVITIES OF JAPANESE PRESS CORPS IN SEOUL. JAPANESE PRESS HERE HAS GROWN INCREASINGLY RESTIVE UNDER RESTRAINTS IMPOSED UPON  
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IT BY JAPANESE EMBASSY PRESSURE AND HOME OFFICE

INSTRUCTIONS TO AVOID REPORTING ANYTHING WHICH WOULD RESULT IN CLOSURE JAPANESE BUREAUS HERE, AND CONSEQUENT/COMPLICATION OF ROKG/GOJ RELATIONS. AT ABOUT TIME POND EXCLUSION, HOWEVER, SEVERAL JAPANESE JOURNALISTS DECIDED DISCONTINUE REPORTING FROM ROKG HANDOUTS ONLY AND BEGAN USING UNATTRIBUTED SOURCES. SANKEI SHIMBUN AND ASAHI REPS SPARKED THIS MOVE. KOREAN REPORTERS, AWARE JAPANESE NEWSMEN'S INTENTIONS, HAVE LATELY BEGUN MAKING COMMON CAUSE WITH JAPANESE IN GETTING CURRENT KOREAN STORY OUT. AP BUREAU CHIEF HAS GROWN PARTICULARLY DARING. ORIGINAL NEWS OF YUN PO-SUN SUMMONS, FOR EXAMPLE, TURNED UP BY SANKEI AND CONFIRMED WITH HELP OF AP. AP THEN FILED FULL STORY. PICK-UP AND DETENTION OF KIM YONG SAM ALSO FIRST KNOWN TO JAPANESE AND AP AS RESULT OF NDP LEAK. AP STORY DISPLEASED ROKG BUT WE HAVE NO SIGN ANY SANCTION INTENDED BEYOND EXPRESSION OF DISPLEASURE BY ROKG.

4. REUTER/HAPDONG VERSION OF ANDERSON COMMENT ON DEATH SENTENCES GIVEN TOP PLAY EITHER ON PAGE ONR OR FOREIGN NEWS PAGE. PAGE ONE TREATMENT FEATURED LARGE AND EXTENSIVE HEADLINES. DONG-A LEAD ON STORY REFERRED TO AMERICAN REACTION TO "DEATH AND OTHER EXCESSIVE SENTENCES" IMPOSED BY COURTS-MARTIAL. FOLLOWING APPEARANCE OF STORY KOREAN JOURNALISTS CALLED USIS PRESS ASSISTANT TO EXPRESS SATISFACTION THAT "AMERICANS AT LAST DOING SOMETHING." THIS IS ABOUT ONLY CASE IN WHICH AMERICAN REACTION HAS BEEN GIVEN PRESS ATTENTION SINCE REPORTS OF CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM DURING CODEL O'NEILL. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT, AS FAR AS WE AWARE, COMPLAINED ABOUT THIS PRESS TREATMENT.

5. MORE INDIRECTLY, PRESS HAS RECENTLY TRIED SIGNAL ITS COURAGE BY TESTING GOVERNMENT CONSTRAINTS. THUS, DONG-A ON JUNE 29 PRINTED LONG CRITICAL EDITORIAL ON "PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY" WHICH CONCLUDED: "IN FACE OF INCREASING THREAT FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS WE SHOULD PLACE GREATER TRUST AND FAITH IN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM." DONG-A ALSO PRINTED FULL TRANSLATION TIME MAGAZINE JULY 8 EDITORIAL ON PRESS FREEDOM. CHOSUN PRINTED LONG EDITORIAL JULY 14 WHICH SOMEWHAT LITERARY AND OBSCURE BUT TAKEN IN PRESS CIRCLES TO BE CRITICAL OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. CARTOONISTS HAVING RELATIVE FIELD DAY IN CRITICISING ROKG ON

LOCAL ISSUES BUT NOT COURTS-MARTIAL. ON JULY 13  
CONFERENCE OF PROVINCIAL BRANCH CHIEFS OF KOREAN  
JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION PASSED STRONGLY WORDED  
RESOLUTION PLEDGING ITSELF TO FIGHT FOR  
"FREEDOM TO REPORT WHICH IS LAST FORTRESS OF  
FREEDOM OF SPEECH."  
LOCAL MEDIA REPORTED GIST OF RESOLUTION. NO KNOWN  
ROKG CRITICISM OF THIS EITHER.

6. COMMENT: WHILE KOREAN PRESS LIKE OTHER OPPOSITION ELEMENTS  
IS ONCE AGAIN SEARCHING FOR WAYS MAKE KNOWN ITS  
DISAPPROBATION CURRENT ROKG EXCESSES, IT WILL  
PROBABLY FAIL AS IT HAS IN PAST BECAUSE OF ITS OWN  
INNATE WEAKNESSES: PRECARIOUS ECONOMIC BASE  
LEAVING IT VULNERABLE TO ROKG-DIRECTED ECONOMIC  
PRESSURES, FAILURE OF MANAGEMENT TO TAKE LEAD FOR  
VARIETY OF REASONS, LACK OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN  
MANAGEMENT AND WORKING MEMBERS AND GOVERNMENT  
PRESSURE. COMPARED TO ROLE OF CHRISTIAN ACTIVISTS  
IN CURRENT SITUATION, PRESS ACTIVITY HAS  
BEEN NEGLIGIBLE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE  
FOR REASONS CITED ABOVE.  
HABIB

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC RELATIONS, INSTRUCTIONS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, GOVERNMENT MONOPOLIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 20 JUL 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ShawDG  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974SEOUL04722  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ShawDG  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 06 AUG 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <06-Aug-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <27 MAR 2003 by ShawDG>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ACTIVITIES OF KOREAN PRESS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINS, KS, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005